

What about the Salvation Army?

It is more than a benevolent organization. It is also a religious human institution which teaches doctrines opposed to the word of God. It was started by William Booth in 1899 when he left the Methodist Church. Some of their beliefs, taken from the Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine: Total Hereditary Depravity, Direct operation of the Holy Spirit, they administer no baptism, they do not observe the Lord's Supper, they use instrumental music in worship, they have women preachers.

The Bible forbids a Christian to give any sort of encouragement or assistance to a false teacher (2 John 6-11).

- by David Padfield

Premarital Wallpapering

We live in an age pre-occupied with sex. It is used in ads to sell books, cars, vacations and toothpaste. And so it is no wonder young people think that they need to try out marriage by "living together". We are told that the physical relationship is such an important part of marriage that the man and woman involved need to have this experience to see if the marriage will be good.

I have an alternative: let the man and woman wallpaper a room together. Let them slop paste around, spill water, get in each other's way, look at each other's work, and learn of each other's patience, or the lack of it there's the way to see what it is going to be like!

Young people: don't be fooled by what the devil preaches in books, on television, and from the mouths of his disciples. Marriage is not primarily a physical relationship. It is a life-long commitment by two people who care about each other. Love and sex are not the same thing.

Learn about each other. Spend time together. Plan as much for your marriage as you do for your wedding. Papering a room together is not as much of a joke as you think! How two people get along together and whether they have common ideas and goals make for the best of situations.

Jesus called living together "sin", fornication. He placed the highest values on marriage, using it as the figure to describe his relationship with the church (Eph.5). He wants you to have all the joy God gives - including that of the physical relationship in marriage. But, carefully consider that He shows a basis for marriage far beyond that of the world. In fact, it is in Him!

- by Robert Hines

Guns and the Gospel

You cannot make me love my neighbor, not even at the point of a gun. Great armies and a display of power cannot convert a sinner. Even an ideal society cannot drive hatred, greed and lust from the heart of the selfish. But what guns, armies, and society in general cannot do, the gospel can. It is therefore more powerful.

The gospel centers on the love of God for man, and the death of Jesus on behalf of each and every one of us. As to its message, and what it calls upon a man to do and be, it is remarkable how different it is to the approach of human wisdom. It does not call upon you to improve society or to organize and orchestrate a system of reform. It rather calls upon you to:

(1) Change yourself! Repent of and repudiate the evil in your own life. Love and worship your God. Love and be kind to your fellow man. Understand that even if no one else in the world changes, you are obligated to change and to be a faithful servant of the Lord.

(2) Teach your fellow man about Jesus. Do not try to force anything on anybody.

A people can be overrun by armies and subdued by bombs, but the likely result is that their old animosities will remain and, given opportunity, they will wreak vengeance. That is the story of mankind. When wounds are nourished, woes are perpetuated.

The human approach is cosmetic; change the face of things, the society and circumstances. God's approach is to change the heart. Those who are converted will work in society as salt and light. They force nothing, but oh, how wonderfully they affect almost everything. But more importantly, it gives them a right relationship with God. This should be our goal--not the changing of society, but the changing and saving of individuals.

Although there were audiences and crowds to which the gospel was preached, it is striking and significant to note the number of times in the book of Acts where the gospel was preached to one man, or to a few. Peter did not preach politics to the Ethiopian eunuch or Cornelius, although both were men of significant public responsibility. He preached Jesus. The eunuch believed, confessed Christ, and was baptized. Cornelius was converted and baptized. There is more lasting power and benefit to society in converting individuals than in political power or military might.

The hope of is the gospel. It is in individuals believing in it, practicing it, and preaching it. The gospel is God's power to save.

- by Jere E. Frost

Christmas - IN REVERSE!!!

It has been frequently noted that the Scriptures do not authorize any religious observance of the day that men call "Christmas". There is simply no mention of any such observance in the Bible, and we know from historical accounts that the significance attached to this day originated hundreds of years after the church began in the first century. We do not even know the birthday of Jesus. In fact, we can be almost certain it was NOT December 25th. Any attempt to make this a day of special religious significance is without Biblical authority and should be avoided (Col. 3:17).

It is sad, but some who would defend the statements made above are guilty of a sort of 'reverse' observance of Christmas. While condemning the denominational folks for their practice of making a 'holy' day which the Bible does not mention, they allow this day - and the season which surrounds it - to crowd God completely out of their lives.

Special activities associated with family and friends, school events, special performances, traveling, entertaining, visiting, partying, etc., are all conducted at a frantic pace this time of year. Many Christians allow these secular activities to push God out of His place (Matt. 6:33). Assemblies of the church are missed, Bible study is neglected, personal work and other efforts of the local church are abandoned. Verbally we denounce the religious observance of Christmas but, in practice, we have established a kind of "reverse" observance. In December we become LESS religious!

So, Christian, as you go through your busy schedule at this time of year, we hope you will stop to realize the things that are most important. Do not allow this man-made day to crowd God and His service out of the picture. Keep working and growing. Keep on keeping on. Think!

- by Greg Gwin